

AMATEURADIO

News of the Amateur Radio
and Amateur Satellite Services

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This Ham Takes to the Wild Blue Yonder



Holding a model of an F-15A Eagle fighter aircraft, Air Force Secretary Verne Orr relaxes for a moment in his Pentagon office.

(U.S. Air Force photo)

Once a department store management trainee, Verne Orr has spent much of his working life as a public servant rising to the position of Secretary of the Air Force, a post he has held since February of 1981. Born and raised in the Midwest, Orr moved with his family from his native Iowa to California at about the time he entered high school. There, he graduated from Pomona College with a BA degree, and from Stanford University Graduate School of Business with an MBA in 1939. During World War II, he was an ensign in the Supply Corps of the U.S. Naval Reserve, serving in both the American and Pacific theaters. He was released from active duty as a lieutenant in 1945, and six years later was honorably discharged from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander. Following his release from active duty, he spent the next 15 years as a partner in his father's new car dealership in Pasadena, and the next three years as president of a savings and loan association. Then-governor of California Ronald Reagan invited Orr to serve as the state's Director of Motor Vehicles, a position he held from 1966 to 1969. He served for a brief time as the state's Director of General Services, and in January 1970 began a five-year term as California's Director of Finance. From 1975 to 1980, he taught government finance courses at the University of Southern California Graduate School of

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These Hams are SET!

A ship carrying chemicals was burning off Florida's central east coast and began to spread toxic fumes to coastal areas. However, there isn't any reason to worry. The situation was all part of a national emergency preparedness drill designed to test the ability of Amateur (ham) Radio operators to provide communications during emergencies.

Last October, members of the Seminole County (Florida) Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), the Seminole County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) and the Metropolitan Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Teams, (REACT, a Citizens Band organization), participated in the 37th annual Simulated Emergency Test. This exercise was sponsored by the American Radio Relay League, the membership organization representing over 400,000 radio amateurs in the U.S. and Canada.

The Seminole County ARES, in cooperation with the local Red Cross, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and

the Sheriff's Office, through RACES, volunteered equipment and personnel to test the effectiveness of the disaster communications system in the Seminole County.

Gordon Fella, the League's Emergency Coordinator for Seminole County, directed the effort. When the imaginary disaster occurred, local amateurs activated their radio stations, many without commercial power, to pass simulated emergency messages to various officials. In an actual emergency, these officials would supply the necessary relief. These test messages simulated the opening of shelters, evacuation of residents from coastal areas, and notification of hospitals to prepare for victims of the imaginary disaster. Interstate messages were handled by ARRL's National Traffic System, a voluntary, country-wide network for sending long-range radio messages.

— Billy F. Williams, Jr.

Wild Blue Yonder

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Public Administration. He achieved national prominence when he served on the Reagan Presidential Campaign Committee and was deputy director of the Office of the President-Elect during the transition.

ARRL: How and when did you first become interested in Amateur Radio? What in particular attracted you?

ORR: I became interested in 1959. Our daughter Carolyn was 12, and I thought if she had an Amateur Radio license it would give her an easy way to talk with boys. So, she and I studied together for our Novice licenses. Our son Robert, 10, also became interested, and we all three got our licenses together.

ARRL: Has Amateur Radio helped you, either with your new career or in other ways?

ORR: In my present position as Secretary of the Air Force, I find my knowledge of Amateur Radio exceedingly beneficial. So much of the Air Force involves communications, satellites and radar, that my knowledge is helpful. In addition, it serves as a common introduction when I go into our avionics shops and talk with our technicians.

ARRL: In the early '60s, the Air Force literally helped launch the amateur satellite program by providing space aboard their rockets for OSCARs 1 through 4. [OSCAR — Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio.] How would

you compare the growth of the OSCAR program over the past 20 or so years with commercial efforts in this area? Are launch opportunities in general going to become more difficult to obtain in the future?

ORR: The growth of the OSCAR program has closely paralleled the growth of commercial COMSAT programs, but at a lower level. The satellites have increased tremendously in capability and complexity over the last 20 years, and made a major jump with the Phase IIIB satellite launch. This new satellite is computer-controlled, has an apogee kick motor, a peak rf power of 50 watts per channel and 128 telemetry channels, and weighs 250 pounds — all in all, a very impressive satellite.

The launch opportunities are decreasing and will probably become more difficult in the future. As the satellites have grown in capability, they have grown in size and weight. They are no longer a small satellite to be "tossed over the side;" they are system drivers, as complex as the potential host. The best opportunity for launch is the Space Shuttle, where weight and size are relatively unconstrained for small, "important" secondary payloads. In this case, "important" is defined as in our interest because of the positive international goodwill created by supporting worldwide Amateur Radio operators.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE? Contact Perry Williams, ARRL's Washington Area Coordinator, and arrange for a personal visit by calling (202) 296-9107.

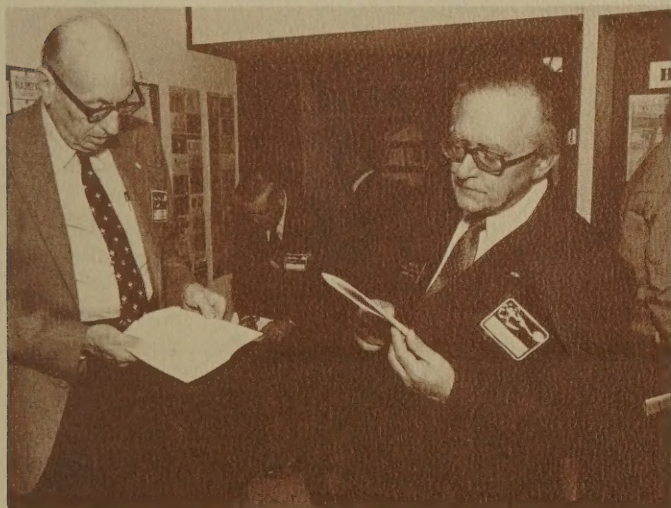
Radio Activity at the National Bureau of Standards

Although there has been radio activity at the National Bureau of Standards since at least 1908 (NBS operates standard time and frequency radio broadcast stations), and individual amateurs have been involved in much of it, no record of an Amateur Radio club can be found before the organization of the Bureau Radio Amateur Signal Society (BRASS) in 1981. Last year, the club secured use of the former experimental Solar House on the NBS grounds as club headquarters and site of its Amateur Radio station.

On November 3, the NBS BRASS station was dedicated in a pleasant afternoon ceremony. NBS officials, ARRL's late President Victor C. Clark, Atlantic Division Director Hugh Turnbull, Washington Area Coordinator Perry Williams, Section Manager Karl Medrow, Montgomery

County Emergency Coordinator Howard Parker, many emergency management, fire and police officials, and representatives of radio clubs at other Federal Government agencies were invited. (U.S. Senator and ham, Barry Goldwater, was invited, but had to cancel because of the press of Senate business.)

In place of a ribbon-cutting, the program listed a "Power Up." Dr. Ernest Ambler, Director of NBS and former President Clark jointly threw a switch which started a Morse Code message welcoming everyone to the ceremony. A key mounted on a plaque mysteriously moved up and down in rhythm with the signals. After the ceremony, close inspection revealed a piece of fishline tied under the key.



Past ARRL President, Victor C. Clark discusses the NBS-BRASS dedication program with ARRL Washington Area Coordinator Perry F. Williams.



Dr. Ernest Ambler, NBS Director and Victor C. Clark, past ARRL President, listen to the "Mystical Key" at the NBS-BRASS Station Dedication on November 3, 1983.

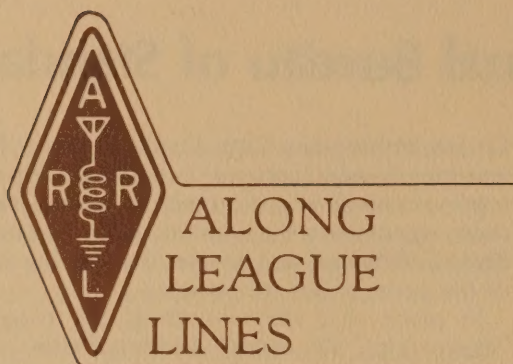
Along League Lines

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ing could hardly have been more complimentary to the Amateur Radio Service. We especially liked these words, used to describe those who took the time to file comments with FCC: "These commenters are the people who have made the ARS [Amateur Radio Service] what it is today — a service that is a model of public responsiveness in times of emergency and distress, and a service that is a model of self-enforcement and volunteerism. The strong sentiment they expressed in this docket about the nature of such a service is a critical factor in weighing the proposals."

With the no-code issue behind us, we can get down to the business of recruiting into Amateur Radio those very

people the Commission wants to see attracted into our avocation. The only real difference between the Commission's original perception and ours is that of viewing Morse Code as an unnecessary obstacle, rather than as an important part of the socialization process of a new amateur licensee. The desirability of growth was not seriously at issue; the question was whether the future development of the Service would be permitted to proceed on terms prescribed by its practitioners. It is gratifying that the FCC has entrusted us with the responsibility for seeing that Amateur Radio grows and develops on **our** terms, rather than theirs — and with the Commissioner's continued support, so we shall!



The Federal Communications Commission gave radio amateurs an early Christmas present on December 14 by agreeing unanimously to abandon its proposal for some form of no-code Amateur Radio license. The recommendation of the Commission's Private Radio Bureau, reflecting the tenor of the comments received, was to "bury the concept of no-code." In adopting the recommendation, the Commissioners, in the words of Chairman Mark Fowler, "put it to rest once and for all."

Last year, the FCC formally proposed to establish an Amateur Radio license not requiring knowledge of the Morse Code. The Commission argued that there are a lot of intelligent people out there that could contribute to the Amateur Radio Service, without proficiency in Morse Code, and cited young people interested in computers and handicapped individuals as persons who would benefit from a codeless license.

However, the consensus among licensed amateurs

showed strong opposition to any sort of "codeless" amateur license. Many licensed hams have many reasons for their opposition of the no-code license; although for the most part, hams see the Morse Code requirement as a "price to pay for admission." In a very real sense that is what it is. Few prospective amateurs already know the code. Thus, anyone desiring to enter the hobby must be willing to invest a few hours learning the code. Having made this investment and commitment, the new ham is likely to respect his license. He "paid" for it.

Since the Commission already knew that the presently licensed amateur community was strongly opposed to a no-code license, filing comments could not simply be a numbers game; force of logic was even more important than weight of numbers. The amateur community came through in fine style. The comments weren't simple statements of opposition; for the most part they were well-reasoned arguments which looked at both sides of the issue. Certainly, our cause was given a tremendous boost when scores of Senators and Congressmen, and especially, Senator and fellow radio amateur, Barry M. Goldwater, came out against the no-code license after carefully weighing its potential dangers and benefits.

After the Commission staff examined the comments, the Commissioners made their decision. The FCC meet-

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